

The Season's Children's Books

By HILDEGARDE HAWTHORNE.

III. Fairy Tales; Folk Tales; Other Tales; for Children Big and Little.

CHILDREN'S book week is younger than any child who can read, but it has already grown very large and important. Children's books may not be as numerous as children, taking each book by itself; but since each one has thousands like it they must outnumber all the children, big and little, and it seems quite worth while to devote one week out of the year, since weeks are gradually coming to mean devotions to one or another ideal, aim or cause, to the business of talking about children's reading and whatever relates to it.

The oldest, the most enduring stories of the world are those that have to do with magic, spells, sub or super human creatures, legends and dreams. The larger portion of such stories are now turned over to children; practically every normal child passes through a time when fairies and gnomes and witches, animals that talk and princesses that spring from a cut lemon are real to him. It is his inheritance, and such fairy things are not a whit more amazing to him than the happenings with which he is confronted in his most wakeful and alert moments, with the sun overhead and the common business of life in progress. So it seems only proper to give this article over to a consideration of such stories and allied tales, whether for the very small boy and girl or the older brother and sister. And since song, poetry and drama are also ancient matters, and since children delight in them equally with the story, I will have something to say about those volumes of plays and verse that the publishers are offering for young readers and actors.

A special type of animal story has appeared within the last few years and found enormous favor among youngsters not yet able to read for themselves. Every season there are several of these little books. David Cory and Thornton Burgess are two prime favorites, and the fat little book by Cory called "Billy Bunny and His Friends" (Doran) is in that writer's best vein. It is good to read aloud to restless little people, it is good for those who can do so to read themselves. The stories are full of quaint adventure, each chapter being a complete tale, yet all hooked together. The style is just that intimate, chatty sort that wins a child, and the nature facts are facts, for all the fancy that is mingled in the telling of what happens to the small creatures of the woods and fields. There are delightful drawings for the book by Clara L. Van Vredenburg, who deserves a special word for the skill and spirit of her work.

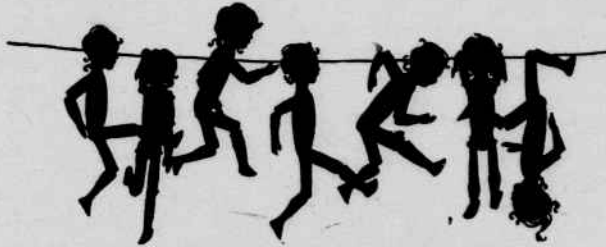
Cory's "Puss Junior" stories (Harpers) are in a different vein, but are quite as popular. Puss is a son of the famous Puss in Boots, and he goes to various lands of fairy lore to search for his father. There have been a half dozen and more of these tales, each bringing in characters known to all childhood, and all having to do with the travels and adventures of Puss. The books are illustrated with clever little pictures in black and white, and have that personal charm and friendliness which belongs to Cory's writing.

Coming from further afield are the Russian picture tales by Valery Garrick, trans-

lated by Neville Forbes. "Still More Russian Picture Tales" (Stokes) is the title this year, this being the third volume to appear. The small oblong books are pretty to look at with their delightful covers, decorated with a drawing by the author, who has made all the illustrations, which are as full of the folk quality, humor and

man when the humor suits. The stories are written with a straightforward simplicity that hits the mark and ought to be much liked. The book has literary qualities of high order. There are several illustrations by A. L. Ripley.

Another tale from foreign lands is "Kari the Elephant," by Dhan Gopal Mukerji.



From *Memoirs of a London Doll*. (Macmillan Co.)

fancy as are the stories. There is the tale of the Fox and the Hare, of the Sparrow and the Blade of Grass, of the Camel and the Ram, with a dozen more, the telling being accomplished with that leisure, that reiteration so pleasing to children. A book like this is a real treasure to a little boy or girl.

The appeal of verse to the young has been recognized ever since Mother Goose was created. May Byron has a gift for rime that lends itself charmingly to her little animal stories. Slender but sizable

It is the story of an elephant in captivity which was given to a boy, the lad who tells the story. It is an extremely interesting account of the life of such an animal, and also of the Indian child, and is written by a man who speaks from actual experience and inheritance. All children will like this book, and the older members of the family will find a number of new items in it that are worth knowing, and will enjoy the manner of its telling, which is the manner of a man of the East, and not our manner. It ends with the running away of Kari in



From *"Rainbow Gold."* An anthology by Sara Teasdale. (Macmillan Co.)

volumes with lovely picture covers, each of her yarns tells some one adventure, entirely fantastic, and each is accompanied by pictures to make any youngster shout with joy, the work of M. M. Rudge and Gordon Robinson. "The Little Black Bear" (Doran) is the newest of the stories.

Much closer to nature are the tales by Allen Chaffee, who knows the habits of the animals he portrays, and introduces his readers to the true life of the wilderness. "Fuzzy-Wuzz" (Milton Bradley Company) is the story of a brown cub bear of the Sierras, caught by a ranger and tamed, living for a time with his human friends, and then returning to the wilderness. It is told most entertainingly, with pictures to help by Peter Da' Ru, and is for children older than the audience of the Cory books. "South American Jungle Tales" (Duffield), translated from the Spanish of Horacio Quiroga by Arthur Livingstone, is a mingling of fact and fairy tale. These stories tell the real life of the animals of the jungle, the fish of the wild rivers, the splendid birds of the forests, but tell it much as Kipling told his "Jungle Tales," where the wild creatures speak with each other, and make friends with

a fit of insanity into the jungle, from which he never returns, and here is the closing sentence:

"Though as an animal Kari is lost to me, my soul belongs to his soul, and we shall not forget each other."

J. E. Allen has made the pictures.

But these books are taking us away from the little children, and there is plenty yet for them. There are two little books by Dolores McKenzie, for instance, small enough for the littlest hands to hold, and gay enough to please even a sick child. "The Arrival of Mr. Widdle Waddle," and "Mr. Widdle Waddle Brings the Family" (Penn Publishing Company), are the two titles. The hero comes from the moon and meets a lot of little earth animals, and has funny adventures, and is kind and jolly. And he likes it so much that he goes back for his family, which all arrives in the second volume. The pictures in this kind of story are as important as the text, and Ruth H. Bennet has done them splendidly, both in color and line. These are books that will give a great deal of pleasure.

A book that appeals to young men and women just beginning to read is "Journeys

In Story-Land," (Houghton Mifflin), a collection of jingle, jolly rimes that tell simple stories. It has taken three people to do them, James H. Van Sickle, Wilhelmina Seegmiller and Frances Jenkins, and the drawings are in tint by Maginel Wright Enright, who has been making pictures for the happiness of children a number of years.

Mother Goose is a perennial, and "Nursery Rhymes" (Knopf) is Mother Goose in a small thin quarto with the most colorful and adorable pictures by C. Lovat Fraser. A delightfully toned parchment paper is used on which these pictures show up magnificently. Besides the color pictures spirited little line drawings skip through the text. For children of the same age "The Comic A B C" (Funk & Wagnalls) will prove attractive. It is one of the Mary Carolyn Davies books, whose verse for children is so popular, and is an oblong octavo with a picture in flat color on each page, the drawing of the animal or figure celebrated in the accompanying couplet. Rather more elaborate is another book of her verse, "The Merry Children's Book of Play" (Funk & Wagnalls), larger, with silhouettes on the text pages and full pages in color opposite. The children sung in the lines are occupied in those games and activities dear to childhood, and the stanzas have a rollicking, musical quality that is distinctly agreeable.

The excellent notion of combining the energies of two heroes of the ages occurred to J. Edgar Park, and resulted in "The Merrie Adventures of Robin Hood and Santa Claus." Santa Claus and Robin conspire to take the toys from those who have far too many, and to give them to those who have none. The Sheriff and his daughter are in the tale, and Robin outwits them as he always did. It is a laughable, amusing yarn, with plenty of snap. Its board covers are very gay, and it has a colored frontispiece and many drawings in red line by W. H. Montgomery to add to the fun.

We have left the really young ones behind now, and come to the stories written for children who can read easily for themselves and like long words. Another Santa Claus yarn is "The Boy Who Lived in Pudding Lane," (Atlantic Monthly Press) by Sarah Addington. Here is the story of Santa Claus as a boy that is told, and most delightfully told. A lovely idea, and one of those that makes you wonder why no one ever thought of it before. Most of the nursery folk come into it and Santa proves to be exactly the sort of little boy one would expect from his later life. There are charming pictures in color by Gertrude A. Kay, and the book is beautifully made and printed.

Another volume from these same publishers is by Ralph Bergengren, with the illustrations by a Rumanian artist, Tom Freud. "David, the Dreamer," tells the truly amazing dreams of David, interspersing the prose with the liveliest rhymes. Fido, the dog, for instance, always speaks in verse. Fancy inspires these dreams, they have a true dream quality of unexpectedness, while the illustrations in delicate flat tones are unusually attractive.

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From *"Days of the Colonists,"* by L. Lamprey. (F. A. Stokes Co.)



From *"La Salle the Conqueror,"* by Virginia Watson. (Henry Holt & Co.)